



# PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

Inspiring professional growth...one paralegal at a time ®

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## **2020/2021 EXECUTIVE BOARD CANDIDATES and BIOS**

**PRESIDENT:** Asha Maharaj-Lucas, FRP

Asha Maharaj-Lucas is an executive assistant/paralegal with PSC in Tallahassee, Florida and received her bachelor's degree in Political Science from Rutgers University. Asha is a member in good standing of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. ("PAF"). She is the current President and was the 2nd Vice-President (2017-2018), 1st Vice-President in charge of PAF seminars (2018-2019). She has chaired the PAF Scholarship Committee (2016-present), Student Membership Committee (2016 - present), and Seminar Committee (2016-present). Asha is an active member and past/current president (2015-2017, 2018-present) of the Big Bend Chapter where she also was Vice-President (2013-2015), Newsletter Committee Chair (2015-2016), Job Bank Committee (2015-2016), Website Committee (2016-present), a member of the State New Member Subcommittee and instrumental in obtaining benefits for all PAF members. She is a member an Advisory Board member for Keiser College paralegal studies and a board member of the Theatre Tallahassee. Most recently she was appointed to the FRP Enrichment Committee with the Florida Bar.

Asha is also involved with the Legal Aid Foundation, Tallahassee Women Lawyers, Breast Cancer Foundation, Guardian ad Litem, Heart Walk, ALS Association, and the Lawson Foundation. She is the recipient of the 2019 & 2020 NALA Affiliate Award as well as the Leadership of Excellence Award from Keiser College.

Asha responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

"I would like the membership to grow. For membership to be more affordable and increase member benefits. I am using my knowledge and experience from other associations to make changes in PAF to propel it into the future."

**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

"I still believe that we need to become better writers and be more analytical. Because of COVID 19 it is more important to network and reach out to members of our profession with support and kindness."



**FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT:** Michelle Ridge, CP, ACP, FCP

Michelle Ridge was a paralegal in the Davie, Florida area for over 20 years, and most recently relocated to the Tallahassee, Florida area. Michelle is a member in good standing of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. ("PAF"), and currently is the Technology chair and past NALA Liaison. Michelle was a member of the Broward chapter and Treasurer. She is currently a member of both the Boca and Big Bend Chapters. She is past president of the Boca Chapter and has been on the seminar committees for the Broward, Boca, and Big Bend Chapters. She also volunteered with Broward Health's charity gala and Drag Race for a Cure.

Michelle was also the recipient of the 2016 NALA Affiliate Award.

Michelle responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

" I believe I am a good candidate because of my experience and knowledge. I have held the First Vice President and President positions in my prior chapter for several years. I especially understand the importance of planning the state Seminar and how vital that event is to the overall financial wellbeing of PAF as an organization."

**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

" I believe our legal community is faced with new challenges in the face of the current crisis and I have some technology experience to assist the board during this time."

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**SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT:** Tonya Wood, RP, AACP, FRP

Tonya Wood is a Paralegal at Donahoo & McMenamy in Jacksonville, Florida. She received her Bachelor of Arts at the University of South Florida. Tonya is a member of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. ("PAF"), and an active member of the First Coast Chapter where she is the current President, holding that position since 2018. She was also a Member at Large Board Member (2017-2018). Tonya is an active member of the Junior League of Jacksonville where she has been Secretary (2013-2014), Strategic Planning board member (2014-2015), Vice President of Fund Raising (2018-2019), Vice President of Communications (2019-2020), Nominating Election board member (2019-2020) and Nominating Chair board member (2020-2021). She was President of Sigma Delta Tau Sorority at the University of South Florida (1996 and 1997).

Tonya has received the Junior League Leader of the Year Award (2018), Junior League Presidents Award for Outstanding Voluntarism (2019) and Outstanding Chapter President from Sigma Delta Tau (1996).



Tonya responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

"My leadership and communications training makes me uniquely qualified to serve as Second Vice-President. I will bring my knowledge and experience to the State Board and further the organizations impact. Moreover, the Second VP must not only complete their responsibilities, but also actively engage with the membership to provide guidance and training."

**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

" One of the most important issues facing our profession is our perceived significance. I would address this issue by working with the individual chapters to develop a "plan" that's specific to their recruitment needs, membership satisfaction and community involvement while continuing to provide guidance through training"

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**SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT: Wendy R. Keller, FRP**

Wendy Keller is a Paralegal at Hill Ward Henderson in Tampa, Florida. She received her associate's degree at Hillsborough Community College. Wendy is a member of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. ("PAF"), and an active member and President of the Hillsborough Chapter. She was also Chapter Director (2017-2018) and Chapter Treasurer (2018-2019).

Wendy responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

"I am a very detail-oriented person. Once I commit to something, I will work on it diligently and wholeheartedly"

**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

" Lack of involvement and willingness to follow through on commitments made. I encourage involvement of our members on the Board or other committees. I also step in and am willing to help when people do not follow through with their commitments – for whatever reason."

**SECRETARY:** Candice Mills Jones, FRP

Candice is a secretary with the City Attorney's Office in Tallahassee, Florida. She received her bachelor's degree in Paralegal Studies and a Paralegal Certificate from the University of Maryland University College. Candice is a member in good standing of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. ("PAF") and a member of the Big Bend Chapter. She is also a member of Florida Registered Paralegal Enrichment Committee (2020-2023).

Candice responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

" I previously served as clerk for two boards and the job description is identical to PAF's secretary position."

**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

" The most important issue facing our profession continues to be recognition and classification. Some are performing paralegal duties while being classified and paid otherwise.

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**TREASURER:** Heather Rice

Heather is a paralegal with Clark Partington in Tallahassee, Florida. She received her bachelor's degree from Florida State University. Heather is an active member in good standing of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. (PAF) and the current Treasurer. She is also a current member of the Big Bend Chapter where she is Interim President (July 2020-December 2020), Vice President (2020), on the Public Relations Committee (2020), Seminar Committee (2019-2020), and is Newsletter Editor (July 2020 – December 2020),

Heather responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

" I am passionate about my service to PAF and enjoy keeping the accounting books in good condition."



**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

" The biggest issue facing our profession and association is learning to live with the new remote era. As a PAF board member I would do all I could to help members acclimate to the new normal."

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**DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:** Genna Rubolino, CP, FRP

Geena is a paralegal with Brinkley Morgan in Boca Raton, Florida. She received both her bachelor's degree in Business Management and Paralegal Studies Certificate from FAU. Genna is an active member in good standing of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. (PAF) and a member of the Palm Beach County Chapter where she was Treasurer (2016-2019), and Social Committee Chair (2017-2019). She is also an FAU Speaker/Recruiter for Membership and Scholarships. She received the Palm Beach County 2016 Scholarship Award.

Genna was also a Young Adult Division Volunteer (2018) with the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach and a Boca Raton Junior League Volunteer (2013-2014).

Genna responded to the following two questions as follows:

**1) What do you feel makes you uniquely qualified to serve in the position for which you seek election?**

" I am interested in mentoring paralegals, legal assistants and assisting with the continued growth of the paralegal profession. I have the qualities needed to assist individuals in becoming members or creating membership opportunities. As our Chapter's Social Committee Chair, I helped raise \$20,000 each year by networking, out of the box marketing, teamwork and being business savvy."

**2) What do you see as the most important issues facing our professions and how would you respond to these issues as a Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., Board member?**

I cannot speak for everyone, but in my experience, whenever I tell someone that I am a paralegal, it's met with "Wouldn't you rather be an attorney?" The paralegal position is not recognized outside the legal field as a viable, successful profession. PAF does a great job of keeping paralegals educated, connected and involved. I would like to enhance PAF's efforts by providing ideas of how we can stand out among other memberships."